WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   An image processing apparatus for correcting a positional offset of an input image with respect to a reference image, comprising:

5   storage means for storing information about the reference image, including a reference position;

          area information specifying means for obtaining information about a plurality of areas included in the input image;

10   target position calculating means for calculating a target position on the input image on the basis of the information obtained by said area information specifying means;

          calculating means for specifying information
15   about the reference image in accordance with the input image from said storage means, and calculating a positional offset between the reference position included in the specified information and the target position; and

20   correcting means for correcting positions of a plurality of areas included in the input image by using the offset calculated by said calculating means.

2.   The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said
25   area information specifying means extracts an area having the same attribute from the input image to specify information including an attribute, size, and

position of the area.

3.   The apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the attribute includes a table attribute, text attribute, title attribute, and frame attribute.

4.   The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said target position calculating means obtains a leftmost end/uppermost end position of a plurality of areas included in the input image and sets the position as the target position.

5.   The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said target position calculating means further comprises removing means for removing an unstable area from a plurality of areas included in the input image, and calculates a target position for the input image by using areas left after area removal performed by said removing means.

6.   The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the unstable area is a noise area.

7.   The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said removing means removes an area having a score less than a predetermined score from a plurality of areas included in the input image.

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8.　　An image processing method of correcting a
positional offset of an input image with respect to a
reference image, comprising:

5　　　　the area information specifying step of obtaining
information about a plurality of areas included in the
input image;

　　　　the target position calculating step of
calculating a target position on the input image on the
10　basis of the information obtained in the area
information specifying step;

　　　　the calculating step of specifying information
about the reference image, the information being stored
with a reference position in storage means in
15　accordance with the input image from the storage means,
and calculating a positional offset between the
reference position included in the specified
information and the target position; and

　　　　the correcting step of correcting positions of a
20　plurality of areas included in the input image by using
the offset calculated in the calculating step.

9.　　The method according to claim 8, wherein the
target position calculating step further comprises the
25　removing step of removing an unstable area from a
plurality of areas included in the input image, and a
target position for the input image is calculated by

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using areas left after area removal performed in the removing step.

10.   A computer-readable storage medium storing program codes for executing an image processing method of correcting a positional offset of an input image with respect to a reference image, comprising:

a program code of the area information specifying step of obtaining information about a plurality of areas included in the input image;

a program code of the target position calculating step of calculating a target position on the input image on the basis of the information obtained in the area information specifying step;

a program code of the calculating step of specifying information about the reference image, the information being stored with a reference position in storage means in accordance with the input image from the storage means, and calculating a positional offset between the reference position included in the specified information and the target position; and

a program code of the correcting step of correcting positions of a plurality of areas included in the input image by using the offset calculated in the calculating step.

11.   The medium according to claim 10, wherein the

target position calculating step further comprises the

removing step of removing an unstable area from a

plurality of areas included in the input image, and a

target position for the input image is calculated by

5   using areas left after area removal performed in the

removing step.